

## Scam artists using Notary, Apostille seals to con homebuyers



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Secretary of State Connie Lawson is warning potential homebuyers about scam artists who use authentications from the Secretary of State's office to swindle Hoosiers into fraudulent real estate transactions. The scam artists are domestic terrorists who refer to themselves as sovereign citizens and believe the government is illegitimate. They are using authentications from the Secretary of State's office to create the illusion they own vacant property to trick Hoosiers into illegitimate home sales.

The Apostilles and authentications they use are exclusively for international business and other transactions, specifically, in patent and trademark registrations and foreign adoptions. They have nothing to do with property.

Many victims don't even realize they have been targeted until they go to sell or buy property, but it can take years to have the statement or lien removed causing major headaches.

Just last month, the General Assembly passed House Enrolled Act 1054, giving the Secretary of State's office the ability to prevent the filing of these deceitful documents. Previously, the Secretary of State's office did not have the authority to reject financing statements or liens. The ability to reject fraudulent filings will protect those in law enforcement and civic leaders from the harassment of criminals.